

cherry tree

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ELOISA AMEZCUA

Mission Bay

I heard you're not dying anymore
though the last time we spoke

the words *blood-letting*
and *hemochromatosis* creeped

out of your mouth hesitant
as your I love you's

but you didn't hesitate when you
pointed your fingers shaped like a gun

at the bridge on Mission Bay you told me
about the time you were seventeen staring

at concrete slabs connecting land
and you dared your friend to jump in

to the cold bay waters
and the idiot broke his neck

not the way your body would break you
from the inside quietly



drowning itself in metallic
compounds that make blood

blood-colored and how red spilled
from the idiot's mouth agape

and you and the other boys ran
down steep steps to the bayfront

and swam to pull his limp body
shattered onto the sloped shore

though none of you knew
how to touch a broken thing

like I didn't know how
when I asked you years later

to let me help you and you told me
to let go and I didn't hesitate

not once to leave you broken
because what else could I offer

except words unable to fix you
or me because I can't help

but think of myself when I think of you
with your thick arms a needle a tube

connected to a machine taking from you
what we both knew I could not.



contributors' notes

Eloisa Amezcua is an Arizona native. Her poetry and translations are published or forthcoming from *Poetry*, *The Journal*, *Prelude*, and others. She is the author of *On Not Screaming* (Horse Less Press, 2016) and the founding editor of *The Shallow Ends*. You can find her at www.eloisaamezcua.com.

Kate Anger's fiction and nonfiction has appeared in journals such as *Faultline*, *Inlandia*, and *Mosaic*. She is a playwright with approximately a dozen produced works, and teaches playwriting at the University of California, Riverside. Kate is currently at work on her first novel, *The Shinnery*, set in West Texas in the 1890s, about a young girl, an unplanned pregnancy, and a killing.

Sarah Blake is the author of *Mr. West* (Wesleyan University Press, 2015), an unauthorized lyric biography of Kanye West. An illustrated workbook accompanies her first chapbook, *Named After Death* (Banango Editions, 2016). In 2013, she was awarded an NEA fellowship. She lives outside of Philadelphia with her husband and son.

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